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# SCIENCE

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## CONTENTS

<i>The American Association for the Advancement of Science:—</i>	
<i>Some Economic Aspects of the World War:</i> PRESIDENT CHARLES R. VAN HISE .....	1
<i>The Nomenclature used in Colloid Chemistry:</i> PROFESSOR ARTHUR W. THOMAS .....	10
<i>Address at the Funeral of Joseph Young Bergen:</i> PROFESSOR EDWIN H. HALL .....	14
<i>Scientific Events:—</i>	
<i>The Medallists of the Royal Society; Report of the Year's Work at the U. S. Naval Observatory; The Enlistment in Engineer Reserve Corps of Technical Students pending Completion of Studies .....</i>	15
<i>Scientific Notes and News .....</i>	17
<i>University and Educational News .....</i>	22
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>A Suggestion for Staining Technique:</i> DR. PAUL ASHLEY WEST. <i>The Preparation of Skeletons by Bacterial Digestion:</i> RALPH G. HURLIN. <i>Shall the Use of the Astronomical Day be discontinued?</i> DR. W. S. EICHELBERGER .....	22
<i>Scientific Books:—</i>	
<i>Gage's The Microscope:</i> PROFESSOR M. F. GUYER. <i>Vogt's Introduction to Rural Sociology:</i> PROFESSOR WARREN S. THOMPSON. ....	23
<i>Special Articles:—</i>	
<i>A Wet Condenser suitable for Continuous High Potential Service:</i> E. KARRER AND H. S. NEWCOMER .....	
<i>The Boston Meeting of the American Chemical Society .....</i>	5

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## SOME ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE WORLD WAR<sup>1</sup>

### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS BEFORE THE WAR<sup>2</sup>

#### *Our Resources*

THE United States is a nation of unmatched natural resources. It is a young nation. Its people have not yet multiplied so that they even approximate the potential possibilities of production. In consequence of this happy situation the United States, antecedent to the war, easily produced a sufficient amount of almost every essential commodity to meet our wants and in addition a large surplus. The production in the United States of the cereals—wheat, oats, rye, corn, and barley—was enormous. Whether the year was favorable or unfavorable, enough of each was produced not only for our own needs, but these commodities could be shipped abroad to any extent that the market demanded.

The situation in regard to meats and fats was like that which obtained for the cereals.

The only fundamental food of which we did not produce vastly more than we needed was sugar; and an adequate supply of this commodity was easily furnished by our insular possessions and by our immediately adjacent neighbor Cuba.

The two great textiles of the world are cotton and wool; and of these "cotton is king." Of the latter commodity the out-

<sup>1</sup> Address of Charles R. Van Hise as retiring president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, December 28, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> For a much fuller presentation of the facts herein summarized see "Conservation and Regulation in the United States during the World War," by Charles R. Van Hise, published by the Food Administration.